lot of revenue land was shown as forest land under Zupdi Jungle;

(b) what are the salient features of the demand made by people in the various representations; and

(c) when and how will this problem be solved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) In view of existing guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the provisions of the said Act are applicable on "Zudpi Jungle" areas, as these are recorded as forests in the State Government records. This was also clarified to the state Government vide guidelines issued by the Ministry on 12th February, 1992 after discussing the issue with the State Government.

(b) In the representations received from various fora, regarding issue of 'Zudpi Jungles' it has been mainly requested to exempt these areas from the purview of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, as the control of such areas is not with the Forest Department.

(c) In the guidelines issued in February, 1992, it was also clarified for that part of 'Zupdi Jungle' which has already been used for certain non-forestry purpose, but, corresponding mutation entries have not been made in the revenue records, specific proposals will be sent by the State Government for approval of the Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Such a suggestion was also made by another committee constituted by the Central Government in 1996, which also comprise of members of State Government. Formal proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, as mentioned above have not been received from the State Government so far. Therefore,, the question of taking a final decision on the issue of 'Zudpi Jungle' areas does not arise.

Decline in Forest Cover

1845. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total forest cover in the country, State-wise, in 1971, 1981, 1991 and 1997;

(b) the reasons for sharp decline in the forest cover;

(c) total forest area under encroachment in Assam and area of reserve forest without plantation or natural forest;

(d) whether Government have received any proposal for dereservation of such forest reserves for other purposes; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Assessment of forest cover is done by Forest Survey of India biennially since 1987. Forest cover in various States as per 1991 and 1997 assessments is given in the Statement *(See below)*.

(b) Ministry has requested the concerned State/UT Governments to take serious note of the depletion of forest cover and to make an indepth analysis of the factors contributing to the depletion of forest cover, to evolve effective strategy and action programme for arresting the trend so as to increase the forest cover in the coming years. Ministry has also requested Planning Commission and all State/UT Governments for increasing the allocation for forestry sector. Major steps taken for proper preservation of forests and forest wealth are:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State/UT Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally Aided Projects are being implemented for preservation of forests and forest wealth;

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all the State/UT Governments to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests through Joint Forest Management;

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands;

(v) A network of protected areas has been established.

(c) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Forest Cover in various States as per 1991 and 1997 Assessments

State/UTs	Recorded Forest Area	Forest cover 1991 Assessment	Forest cover 1997 Assessment	Change	Forest cover 1997 % of Georgraphical Area
Andhra Pradesh	63814	47290	43290	−4000	15.74
Arunachal Pradesh	51540	68757	68602	−155	81.9
Assam	30708	24751	23824	−927	30.4
Bihar	29226	26668	26524	−144	15.3
Delhi	42	22	26	+4	1.7
Goa, Daman & Diu	1424	1255	1255	−	33.9
Gujarat	19393	11907	12578	+671	6.4
Haryana	1673	513	604	+91	1.4
Himachal Pradesh	35407	12480	12521	+41	22.5
Jammu & Kashmir	20182	20449	20440	−9	9.2
Karnataka	38724	32199	32403	+204	16.9
Kerala	11221	10292	10334	+42	26.6
Madhya Pradesh	154497	135541	131195	−4346	29.6
Maharashtra	63842	44044	46143	+2099	15
Manipur	15154	17685	17418	−267	78
Meghalaya	9496	15875	15657	−218	69.8
Mizoram	15935	18853	18775	−78	89.1
Nagaland	8629	14321	14221	−100	85.8
Rajasthan	31700	12889	13353	+464	3.9
Sikkim	2650	3041	3129	+88	44.1
Tamil Nadu	22628	16992	17064	+72	13.1
Tripura	6292	5535	5546	+11	52.9
Uttar Pradesh	51663	33609	33994	+385	11.5
West Bengal	11879	8015	8349	+334	9.4
A&N Islands	7171	7622	7613	−9	92.3
Chandigarh	31	5	7	+2	6.1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	203	206	204	−2	41.5
TOTAL	765210	639364	633397	−5967	19.27